

#LIFEHACKS

Scent Secrets: How to impress without choking everyone around

We've all been there. You're minding your own business when — bam! — someone barrels past you in a haze of cologne so intense that it feels like they're *aromatically committing a crime*. Your lungs beg for mercy, and you're left wondering if they marinated in the bottle overnight.

Guilty. I have done that as a school kid thinking it was cool watching the ladies drop dead around me. And while we might roll our eyes at these "serial spritzers", let's be honest — how sure are you that you aren't making a few rookie mistakes with your favourite perfume?

Let's talk about it. Fragrance can be your secret weapon, a finishing touch that whispers elegance or confidence. So how do you get it right without fumigating your surroundings? And is winter really the magical season for lasting scents? Let's dive nose-first into the art of wearing fragrance.

The basics: Subtle, not suffocating

First things first — less is more. Fragrance should whisper, not shout. Banish the idea that you need to spray yourself into a cloud of scent so thick it can be tracked on Google Maps.

Fragrance should be intimate — something someone notices when they lean in, not from across the room. A couple of well-placed sprays on your pulse points (wrists, neck, behind the ears) is all you need. These spots radiate heat, which helps your fragrance bloom throughout the day.

Now, here's the kicker: **don't rub it in.** Yes, I know it's tempting to press your wrists together like you're sealing the scent in some magical way, but all you're doing is messing with the fragrance's structure. Yes, it sounds pretentious to some, but there's a science behind it. Rubbing breaks down the top notes and mixes the perfume with your skin's oils, which can alter the scent entirely. Spray it, let it settle, and go about your business like the classy person you are.

The air walk: Dramatic, but is it effective?

You've seen it in the movies, I have tried it myself — someone sprays a cloud of perfume into the air and gracefully walks through it like they're emerging from an enchanted fog. It looks dramatic, but is it practical?

Not really. While it looks fancy, it's mostly an inefficient way to wear fragrance. Sure, it gives a lighter, more diffused scent, but most of it ends up in the air (or on your clothes) rather than on your skin. Save this move for when you're in a rush or want a quick refresher without committing to direct sprays. Or you just want to feel extra theatrical. We need that sometimes.



Weather wisdom: Why winter smells different

Here's an interesting nugget: your fragrance behaves differently depending on the weather. In the summer, heat amplifies scent, making even a light spritz feel stronger (and sweat doesn't help matters).

Winter, on the other hand, is a bit more forgiving. Cooler temperatures slow down the evaporation process, so your fragrance lasts longer and stays closer to your skin. This means you can go a bit heavier on those rich, warm scents like vanilla, musk, or amber in colder months without fear of overpowering everyone.

There is a big downside though for smokers and bikers in winter. The smell of petrol fumes or stale cigarette smoke clings to woollen clothes like an unwelcome guest, overpowering even the finest fragrance. Science says wool traps odour molecules and your perfume doesn't stand a chance. The result? A mashup of scents you never signed up for.

The unspoken rules of sampling: Be the shopper, not the fog machine

Last week, my six-year-old daughter dragged me into a store — her mission: inspect every single plushie on the planet. While I stood there in a daze, surrounded by a mountain of stuffed animals, my attention drifted to a young guy in the perfume section. He was on a mission too, apparently. One spray, two sprays, three

— by the time he hit 10 or 12 samples, I'd lost count. He rubbed, aired, sniffed, and nodded in approval like a seasoned critic. And then, to my surprise, he walked out, wallet untouched. A bold move for someone gearing up for a party — armed with not *one* new scent, but *all* of them.

A quick PSA for those of you who love testing perfumes at shops: moderation, my friend. Sampling five fragrances at once will only confuse your nose (and everyone else's). Nothing wrong with spritzing a few pumps to smell nice courtesy of the samples. And please — don't douse yourself in a store sample and leave a scented crime scene behind. Sure, it is free but do you want to smell like a shop? Dab a little on a tester card or your wrist, and give it time to settle before deciding.

The fragrance philosophy: Tone, not tidal wave

At the end of the day, your fragrance should set the tone, not flood the room. Think of it as an extension of your personality — a subtle nod to who you are, not a screaming declaration.

You've probably seen all those late-night reels with your phone inches from your face, featuring Bollywood celebs gushing over how amazing Shah Rukh Khan smells. It is a refined, perfectly curated extension of his personality, all without anyone dropping dead.

A good scent is like a subtle compliment you wear; it enhances your vibe without overwhelming it. Keep it light, keep it thoughtful, and remember: you want people to lean in, not run away.

Now that you are armed with the dos and don'ts, the next step is finding the perfect scent for every season, occasion, or mood. But hey, we'll save that for another day. For now, spritz smartly, laugh at the mistakes we've all made, and maybe double-check that you aren't aromatically murdering anyone on your way out the door.

By E Raza Ronny
Photo: Collected

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